

claims are dependent claims. Since it appears, that the remaining claims are allowable, it is not worth appealing a rejection under §112 of three dependent claims.

The rejection of claims 32-41, 43 and 46 under §112 has been corrected by an amendment hereto, adding to claim 32 twice the two words "of a" in the body of the claim so that the claims reads consistently. Such addition is in the order of a technical or formal correction or amendment. Similarly, claims 44 and 45 have been corrected to place them in proper form. As multiple dependent claims, they now refer to the other claims in the alternative only. This also is a technical or formal amendment.

The only substantive or art-based rejections remaining are rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 48 over Latwesen under §102 and of claims 3, 5/2, 5/3, 6 and 31 over Latwesen under §103. In the prior response, applicant pointed out that applicant claimed priority to an application anti-dating Latwesen. Thus, Latwesen did not comprise prior art. The Examiner responded that the unsolved inventorship issue precluded the Examiner from considering the instant application as a proper continuation of a co-pending application number 09/736,023. That inventorship issue has been resolved, and the instant application is a proper continuation of co-pending 09/736,023.

Reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested, including setting aside the finality of the action mailed 11/29/06 as premature.

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Sue Z. Shaper, Applicants' Attorney at 713 550 5710 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Date \_\_\_\_\_

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